

Tax Credits for Hiring Unemployed Veterans Ready for President's Signature

Washington, DC - With the nationwide unemployment rate among veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan now 12.1 percent, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today voted to pass legislation to address the problem. The VOW to Hire Heroes Act, provides tax credits for businesses that hire unemployed veterans or veterans with service-connected disabilities and takes steps to provide all service-members transitioning to civilian life the job training and skills they need to find a job. Hinchey cosponsored a similar measure earlier this year, and the U.S. Senate passed the bill unanimously last week. President Obama, who supported the idea in his American Jobs Act, is expected to sign the bill into law in the coming days.

"When you do the job of protecting America overseas, you deserve to have a good job when you return home," said Hinchey. "Unfortunately, the unemployment rate for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan is substantially higher than the overall unemployment rate. This bill will help to spur the hiring of veterans and that's absolutely necessary. There are over 45,000 veterans in the congressional district I represent, and each one who wants a job, deserves to have one."

The legislation passed today provides businesses with a tax credit of up to \$5,600 for hiring veterans who have been looking for a job for more than six months, as well as a \$2,400 credit for veterans who are unemployed for more than four weeks, but less than six months. It also provides a tax credit of up to \$9,600 for hiring veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been looking for a job for more than six months.

The bill improves career counseling and services for veterans by making the existing Transition Assistance Program (TAP), an interagency workshop coordinated by Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs, mandatory for service members moving on to civilian life. The bill also allows service members to begin the federal employment process prior to leaving active duty in order to facilitate a truly seamless transition from the military to jobs at VA, Homeland Security or the many other federal agencies in need of our veterans.

Education and training opportunities for older veterans will be expanded, by providing 100,000 veterans of past eras and wars with up to one year of additional Montgomery GI benefits to go towards education or training programs at community colleges or technical schools. Disabled

veterans will receive up to one year of additional Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits.

A Navy veteran himself, Hinchey has assembled a team of dedicated caseworkers with the experience and expertise needed to ensure that those who served in our armed forces are well-served by federal agencies. This year alone, Hinchey's offices have recovered \$523,000 in benefits owed to local veterans who have reached out to the congressman for help when they ran into bureaucratic hurdles and dead ends.

As a strong proponent of veterans issue on the House Appropriations Committee, Hinchey traveled to Afghanistan in December 2001 following the U.S. invasion. In 2009, during the week of Thanksgiving, he visited the country for a third time to have a holiday dinner with the troops. He later made a fourth trip to the country.

Hinchey was a strong supporter of updating the G.I. Bill for the 21st Century, which provided the greatest overhaul of the G.I. Bill in over 20 years. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, Hinchey voted to provide advanced appropriations for the VA to stabilize funding for medical care to veterans. Prior to this change, the VA lacked the ability to budget ahead, causing backups and delays in the delivery of services. Since 2007, Hinchey has voted to add \$23 billion for veterans' health care and services.